AUC's Framework and Action Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

23 September 2020

1. Background and Context

1.1. Amsterdam University College (AUC) is a joint initiative of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU), and offers a Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Science degree, in keeping with the Dutch University College model. Our programme is additionally accredited as small-scale and intensive, and our college is residential with 900 students across three years of studies. Teaching is provided by colleagues based at AUC (most of whom also provide tutoring), colleagues from the two universities, and other colleagues.

1.2 From its inception, AUC's mission has been excellence and diversity in a global city. These two terms go hand in hand: excellence in academic pursuit encompasses diverse perspectives and experiences, while embracing many angles of academic enquiry and fostering a diverse and inclusive community with a commitment to fairness and equity are a mark of the excellence of our aspirations. We therefore educate for excellence in our students (valuing academic curiosity and advancement, as well as achievements in and beyond the curriculum) and to prepare them for the reflective and responsible citizenship needed for high-level performance in, and contributions to, locally and globally engaged and culturally diverse societies. Our learning outcomes reflect this emphasis. They include outcomes demonstrating how AUC graduates are educated to understand and appreciate cultural differences, to reflect on their own value systems, and to embody an openness to the world.[1]

1.3. The global city in which AUC is based is one of the most diverse cities in the Netherlands. In this majority-minority city, over half of the 18-year-olds have a 'non-Western' background (Wekker et al. 2016, 30-1). Moreover, out of those students in the pre-academic high school (VWO 6th grade), 28% have a 'non-Western' background (ibid.). The AUC community and learning environment is also internationally diverse, with students and staff who hail from many different countries. This is in line with our profile, since we aim for a blend of Dutch and international (including EU and non-EU) students who study together in English. However, as stated in the "Let's Do Diversity" report, internationalisation and diversity cannot be conflated (Wekker et al. 2016, 26-7).Targeted, specific measures are necessary in order to achieve a diverse and inclusive institution in the fullest sense. In particular, there is a lack of representation of Dutch students and staff who are Black or from minority and/or refugee backgrounds. This is similar to the situation at the UvA (Wekker et al. 2016, 5). Attracting, retaining and supporting more students

[1] In past years, several actions helping students meet these learning outcomes and ensure a diverse and inclusive community have resulted in improvements. For example, in the mandatory first year course entitled *Global Identity Experience*, students hear, discuss, and read about identity and diversity in different academic and social contexts, including the city of Amsterdam. This course now also provides diversity sessions offered by instructors from the VU Learn Academy, exploring questions about intersectionality, privilege and power that are relevant to students' everyday lives and self-understanding. Another example is Right2Education, an initiative instigated by students and staff alike. Right2Education has now evolved to be a not for profit organisation which provides refugees with valuable access to Dutch and English courses which our students manage and deliver, as well as language exchange and informal cultural and social activities.

(especially students from Amsterdam and the Netherlands) and staff of 'non-Western' and minority backgrounds continues to be an important point of focus for our College. An additional issue for AUC is gender balance and more diversity in socio-economic background. While we are proud to support non-binary and female students, particularly those who focus on the Sciences where female students are traditionally under-represented, we also need a higher ratio of male students overall, so we are keen to find ways to make our programme more attractive to all potential applicants. Ultimately, AUC aspires to be a College where people feel valued and at home, regardless of their religious affiliation, socio-economic and cultural background, skin colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, neural and/or physical differences, and age.

1.4. Like the VU and UvA, AUC's focus on diversity and inclusion has increased in recent years. Our universities established diversity offices and appointed (chief) diversity officers (see https://uvadiversity.blog/documents/ and https://www.vu.nl/en/about-vu-amsterdam/mission-and-profile/diversity/index.aspx). They also carried out research about discrimination, belonging, and mechanisms of in- and exclusion in their communities (see for instance Waldring et al. 2019). Furthermore, they developed programs to attract and retain more students of minority backgrounds, reflected critically on their curricula, and generally worked to improve their "inclusive excellence" (Making Diversity Work, n.d.). In the 2019-20 academic year, AUC staff prepared for a curriculum conversation and, as part of outreach work, began to renew its schools network strategy to attract more students, including more Dutch students and those from families and communities that do not traditionally look to University Colleges. In June 2020, many in our community called for AUC to increase our efforts to realise a diverse and inclusive learning environment, and combat discrimination and racism. In response, on 11 June 2020, AUC's management released a statement acknowledging these calls and committing to a new approach: "we will take action to deliver and embed inclusiveness thoroughly throughout all our processes, including admissions, student support, scholarships, staffing and curriculum development, and we will review and report on our progress regularly". This was followed up by discussions with our co-governance bodies (*medezeggenschap*, or MZ), which includes the Student Council, Board of Studies and Works Council, and led to focus groups involving students and staff. These focus groups provided valuable input that informs the current action plan and forms the first step in delivering this commitment.

1.5. This action plan consists of pillars that focus on all spheres of activity: student support; our curriculum and classes; admissions and outreach; and staffing. Our plan is ambitious, and it is vital that we approach this work in collaborative ways, combining a strong vision on this important agenda with opportunities for mutual dialogue about how we proceed, and that we keep talking to each other as we find common ground in building a more inclusive, transparent and participatory community. Progress on some aspects will be faster than on others, and we also want to learn where we need to do more, or adapt, rethink or do things differently, as we proceed. For this reason, we also need to put in place structures that support us, so the plan also indicates the enabling structures required to oversee and implement our endeavours. To realise the actions described below, AUC will also join up with the Faculties and other institutes of the VU and UvA. Finally, the approach is designed to combine a clear institutional lead with open opportunities for the whole of the AUC community to contribute initiatives and ideas. It is

therefore designed to make room for, and indeed encourage, ground-up initiatives, so it includes regular touchpoints for facilitating community involvement, and, as the actions proceed, students and colleagues are invited to help shape them. Furthermore, it references mutliple timespans, as we need to prioritise, broadly: (1) activities that are underway or can be introduced within the first semester of 2020-21; (2) actions to be undertaken in 2020-21 but that require further attention first; (3) and forward intentions, which often require, and indeed merit, more consideration and consultation. The latter can also become part of AUC's strategic vision, which we will develop in consultation with the community in the coming academic year and implement from 2022 onwards.

1.6. The current action plan relies on and builds on important work previously conducted and documented at AUC. We draw on Voices of AUC reports, the final report of the AUC Task Force Diversity, and the final report and the recommendations of the Working Group for Diversity in the AUC Culture Track curriculum. Furthermore, critical resources that have informed our approach include:

G. Wekker, M. W. Slootman, R. Icaza, & R. Vazquez, (2016). *Let's do diversity*. Report of the University of Amsterdam Diversity Commission. Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam.

University of Amsterdam (2020). *Chief Diversity Officer - 2019 annual report and 2020 plan. Diversity 2.0—From why to how*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam. https://magazines.uva.nl/magazine/annual-report-cdo-team/cover/ (accessed 20 August 2020).

VU Diversity Policies and VU learn academy resources, e.g. Diversity sensitive instruction Handbook

2. Our Framework for Diversity

2.1. Diversity is about accepting and understanding the various ways in which we as people can differ from each other, while ensuring equity across those differences. Inspired by the VU and UvA's work in this area, we distinguish between diversity in knowledge, diversity in teaching and learning, and diversity in our learning environment and community.

Diversity in knowledge refers to the content and overall composition of our courses with the aim of gaining better understanding of how our curriculum is constituted and reflecting on the assumptions that inform it. In the spirit of the "Let's Do Diversity" report (Wekker et al. 2016, 3), we "envision a university community that is conscious of how academic knowledge is influenced by its historical conditions, and of its social and environmental impact". Furthermore, we value diversity as a theme in education and want AUC students to encounter a range of perspectives and become familiar with and knowledgeable about the latest scholarly thinking about identity and diversity in our globalised world.

Diversity in teaching and learning refers to the pedagogy and the learning process that recognises and celebrates a mixed classroom as an asset for academic excellence.[2] The aim is to foster students' skills to create an

[2] Let's Do Diversity report: "The question of diversity in teaching and learning requires that we look at what is being taught, that is, the knowledge content, as well as at how knowledge is being taught, namely the ways of teaching. The question of what is being taught looks toward the curriculum that is being used, while the question of how leads toward the pedagogies, toward the way in which teaching and learning is happening. A diversity-rich curriculum can be taught in a diversity impoverishing way and, conversely, a diversity-poor curriculum can be taught in a diversity enriching way. For example, a course on a postcolonial subject can be taught in a monocultural, one-dimensional way, reinforcing a single perspective, whereas a course on the 'fathers' of a discipline can be taught in a way that reveals the need to go beyond a single perspective, or

inclusive learning climate that can realize the full potential of a diverse classroom and to create more creative, innovative and inclusive approaches. AUC embraces the view that diversity in our education has the aim of educating students to make a difference in society, to contribute to the common good.

Diversity in our learning environment and community refers to the composition of our community of staff and students. AUC strives for a diverse environment that includes people from a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, religions, (dis)abilities, skin colours, ages, sexual orientations and genders.

3. The 'Liberal' in LAS

"... modern liberal education in the Dutch University Colleges goes beyond the traditional liberal arts approach of 'liberating' the individual through intellectual engagement. By combining the disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary learning with research and communication skills, students develop their creativity, entrepreneurialism, skills in working together, international and intercultural understanding abilities and societal engagement". (University Colleges Deans Network Statement)

3.1. Our starting point is that it is possible and necessary to *both* recognise the deeply unequal and unjust realities of the time that are mirrored by and have co-shaped the thought of the time *and* cherish the value of rational thought, scientific rigour, and a focus on interdisciplinary education and inquiry.

As champions of liberation through intellectual engagement, we should continuously strive to reflect on the composition and orientation of our curriculum to ensure it remains contemporary and relevant in every way, and stays fit for purpose. Throughout this framework and plan, we are therefore clear that diversity in knowledge is a pre-requisite for academic excellence: within our liberal arts and science tradition it is incumbent on us all to ask questions about how knowledge is produced and disseminated, critically examine a range of sources, make connections that transcend disciplinary limitations and seek new perspectives.

3.2. The global city is important here too. Our curriculum is not delivered in a vacuum, and our parallel commitment to experiential education requires us to consider how learning intersects with our environment. AUC is embedded in the city of Amsterdam and therefore has a responsibility to play a part in shaping the city. To do so requires awareness of and attention to the city's global and local inequities.

3.3. Diversity is an inherent feature of creating an educational space and experience that equips students with the broadest possible foundation and global orientation to position themselves in our rapidly changing and increasingly complex world. This requires actively encouraging critical self-awareness and a sense of responsibility and the skills needed to make a positive contribution towards a more sustainable and equitable world and to address the most pressing problems of the current time.

beyond the canon. The nurturing of diversity for academic excellence requires a transformation of both what is being taught and how it is being taught" (Wekker et al. 2016, 67).

The Action Plan

A) Curriculum

The aim of this pillar of our Action Plan is to integrate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within and across our curriculum at AUC. This requires identifying potential existing gaps and the creation of clear learning trajectories.

Our starting point is the recognition that knowledge is not produced in isolation, but is 'positioned' since it is produced by specific people in specific contexts. Knowledge is therefore influenced by and reflects power relations and prevailing world views. One of our core ambitions is to make this transparent and equip students with the ability to deconstruct this process, to enrich dialogue, and to practice critical thinking. We believe in providing a broad range of perspectives that will enable our students to identify patterns of omission, privilege and hegemony, locally and at a global scale, and to critically evaluate 'common wisdom' within academia and beyond.[3] As the Working Group on Diversity in the Humanities Curriculum has recommended, we want to move towards an increased "openness of knowledge". Such an approach explicitly situates the canon and addresses the production of knowledge in the disciplines; discusses what is considered valuable knowledge in contemporary academia and what shapes this process and recognizes marginalized positions (thereby making visible the 'default position'). We owe it to ourselves as a community to acknowledge how these elements have shaped what and how we learn and teach, and to equip students with the tools to critically reflect on their own position as (future) scholars, professionals and citizens.

One crucial part of the legacy that determines the positionality of knowledge has been colonisation. We aim for a curriculum that "educates about the past so we can better understand the present" (UvA CDO). We want to provide a solid basis in the core learning of LAS education *along with* an acknowledgement and critique of historic and enduring patterns of domination, marginalisation and oppression, including specifically colonialism and its enduring legacies. To identify and analyse those patterns requires attention to how various social identities, such as sexual orientation, disability, religion, class or gender, overlap and combine into particular kinds of experiences and often oppression or discrimination. Our baseline is therefore to invite a round of focused, substantive conversations among the AUC community about our current and desired curriculum, with an initial focus on the 1st year experience.[3] The aim is to create a bottom-up collaborative process of reflection, exchange and dialogue about how our commitment to diversity translates into our teaching. In this way, we want to create space to share best practices, challenge and inspire each other, and come to workable ideas to further enrich our curriculum going ahead together. This project was initially planned to commence in Spring 2020 but delayed due to the pandemic. It is now rescheduled for Autumn 2020. It will centre on participatory conversation sessions with diverse groups of students and staff, and including the Board of Studies (BoS) in its specific role in relation to AUC's curriculum. Those conversations will result in a better sense of where we stand, where we want to go and concrete recommendations for curriculum design. Following this initial round we intend to engage in a similar exercise focusing on 2nd and 3rd year courses. The exact format will depend on experiences with the above method.

[3] This choice is motivated both by the fact that most mandatory courses that are foundational to any AUC student's experience are situated during the first year, and for any amendments for the curriculum going forward, we will need to take into account the cohorts of students going through the curriculum in terms of sequencing changes.

A1 Curriculum Conversations
Fall 2020/Spring 2021, DoE (ORC, HoS, BoS):[4]

- Conduct Curriculum Conversations of 1st year experience.
- Discuss and implement recommendations, in consultation with BoS.
- Thereafter, evaluate progress and decide on follow-up formats for reflection for 200- and 300-level courses. In parallel, work undertaken in the Humanities culture track to review the curriculum can be shared as a model that might be adapted more broadly, either as a stand-alone exercise or within track reviews.

MILESTONE: Curriculum conversations will have taken place by end of 2020. The results will be shared with the community and included in the consultation processes with the BoS. Heads of Studies and lecturers will reflect on the conversations, in advance of considering the curriculum for 2021-2022.

In addition, we want to create more structural incentives and opportunities as well as visibility of our ambitions for the curriculum. This means deliberately creating space for focused initiatives.

A2: EDIs for DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)
From 2020, D (FDC)
Launch as one of the named strands in Educational Development Initiative calls, opportunities for lecturers to speak together, and with colleagues from the universities and students, about possible strategies for enriching the diversity of their courses, sharing best practices within the context of AUC teaching.
MILESTONE: The next round of EDIs will contain a diversity enrichment strand.

A3: Invite SKO projects that include options to enhance AUC's expertise and practices in areas of diversity, equity and inclusion.
From 2020, DoE (HoS)
MILESTONE: By the end of 2020 DoE will have invited one or more colleagues to complete a SKO relating to this area.

A4: Diversity-related questions in evaluation and in surveys
From 2020, DoE
As of 2019-2020 course evaluations included diversity-related questions. The wording used in these questions is important and should be reviewed, as well as checking that diversity-related questions are included in other surveys we conduct.
MILESTONE: DoE to review this aspect as part of ongoing work (with EMT and the Board of Studies) during the course of 2020-2021.

Other actions that renew our curriculum in line with our commitment require longer lead in time, and can be usefully advanced as part of our strategic vision exercise:

[4] Each action indicates timing and ownership (assistance in brackets). Abbreviations used refer to the action owner as follows:

- DoE Director of Education
- HoS Heads of Studies
- MD Managing Director
- ST Senior Tutor
- D Dean
- SLO Student Life Officer
- ORC Outreach Coordinator
- DC Diversity Coordinator (see the Enabling Platform for more on this proposed role)
- GA Graduate Assistant

A5: DEI focus within AUC's next strategic vision exercise
Commencing 2020-2021, D (EMT)

There will be a review of AUC's curriculum as we approach the time when AUC 21 expires and we renew our strategic vision. In particular, the exercise will attend to the recommendations of the 2020 Voices of AUC report, for a review of how our core offer (GIE, AWS, methods, and other potential new courses) provides an appropriate introduction to how to learn in a LAS context. It also means a deliberate rethinking of our AUC curriculum so that all students receive a common basis that enables them to critically engage with courses throughout and beyond their time at AUC, and could include exploring new Theme or Big Questions courses. Key components of the strategic vision exercise will be established in tandem with a review of the previous version (AUC 21) and will embrace many perspectives. As part of the exercise, it is anticipated that it will attend to how our existing (and potentially revised) foundational course package prepares AUC students to study with a liberal arts perspective, including:

- Critically reflecting on issues such as the genealogy of the major disciplines and the roles that gender, race/ethnicity, class and (dis-)ability play in our major fields of study and academia generally.
- Fostering reflection and self-reflection, including awareness of the continuing legacies of European, Dutch and global histories and their implications.
- Enabling students to conduct constructive, respectful dialogue in an inclusive and diverse classroom.
- Specific proposals have included expanding the current *Global Identity Experience* Course into a 16 week course to be taken in the 1st semester.

MILESTONE: The next strategic vision will have addressed these issues.

B) Outreach[5] & Admissions

This pillar addresses the steps which precede AUC students' opportunity to experience, learn from, and contribute to the AUC curriculum. In 2015, the European Commission stated its concerns regarding access to higher education for children of minority and/or refugee backgrounds (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2015, 19). Wekker et al. (2016, 64-5) reiterate such concerns and emphasize the pitfalls of what they call an "ideology of egalitarianism" in Dutch higher education. Based on this ideology, everyone with academic talent has the same opportunity to succeed at university. This idea that prospective students are only judged based on their abilities – a meritocracy – conceals deep inequalities. Indeed, it masks the fact that the playing field is not level, and differing amounts of social, cultural, and economic capital impact access to higher education.

Fairness – ensuring that talented people can enter universities regardless of their backgrounds – is not achieved by trusting that the system automatically reduces pre-existing inequalities. For AUC, a college with a selective admissions procedure, this means we must critically examine our procedures, use of language, and initiatives related to outreach and admissions in order to realise fair access.

Outreach

Outreach plays an important role in enhancing our potential for increasing our reach, with attention to first-generation students, students from migration and/or refugee

[5] We use the term "outreach" to describe our mutual engagement and cooperation with communities beyond AUC. In doing so we seek to acknowledge that such relations should always be conducted in a spirit of partnership, where both (all) parties bring knowledge, skills and experiences to the table.

backgrounds, and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. To increase applications from such students, AUC must be more visible and actively reach out to community organizations and leaders. The creation and upkeep of a Diversity tab on the AUC website is one small but important gesture within our much broader efforts. Outreach work (led by the Outreach Coordinator) intersects with work performed by our admissions and communications teams, and with work carried out by AUC's Alumni and External Relations Officer.

B1: Revive and enhance AUC schools network strategy
From 2020-21, ORC (D, GA, DC)

AUC's Outreach Coordinator has long worked with a strategy to build and maintain relationships with secondary schools in the Amsterdam area (previously referred to as partner schools). This work occurs in collaboration with AUC ambassadors, who are current AUC students that visit partner schools to meet with prospective students or speak to prospective students during their visits to AUC or Open Days. For 2020-21, the objective is to:

- Diversify the list of partner schools based on a range of criteria relevant to AUC's mission and profile (such as diversity, international, excellence, technasia).
- Establish relationships with staff from partner schools. Establish and implement an engagement plan including: Send promotion materials, provide information about scholarships (especially include the Diversity Awards Programme, once it has been reinvigorated, see below), ensure the Outreach Coordinator visits these schools, possibly with ambassadors and/or other colleagues. Make sure we have concrete targets in place, re: number of visits.
- Develop an overview of events and activities which take place at AUC in 2020-21, most likely online, and get high school students / parents / study advisors to visit. Ensure information about such events is distributed to partner schools, follow up, prospective students are welcomed and, if applicable, shown around.

MILESTONE: By the end of October 2020, a schools network strategy will have been developed ready for implementation in the current academic year.

B2: Ambassador programme
From 2020-21, ORC (with M&C Team)

- Student ambassador visits to schools: make it clear how often such visits occur and involve ambassadors in (online) meetings with schools. Create a list of outreach tasks to which ambassadors can contribute. Ensure the team of ambassadors is diverse in its composition, and receives sufficient support, including attention to socio-economic backgrounds.
- Continue to provide ambassadors with diversity training focused on language, bias, and awareness – via the UvA's CDO team.

MILESTONE: By end October 2020 a programme for ambassador activities and training will have been completed ready for implementation in the current academic year.

B3: Integration into VU and UvA pre-university programmes
From 2020-21, ORC

- Ensure AUC is well-integrated into existing and emerging VU and UvA pre-university programmes, such as the VU's Pre-University College (which includes the Be Prepared Programme) and the UvA's Get Ready pre-university summer programme.

- Make an inventory of VU and UvA outreach activities in which AUC already participates and can participate & ensure further integration of AUC into VU and UvA outreach work (i.e. through FNWI).

MILESTONE: By end Autumn 2020 an inventory will have been completed and instances of integration commenced.

B4: Connect with prospective students through community activities
From 2020-21, ORC (CPIC, GA)

- Create a clear inventory of AUC's involvement in high school mentoring programmes / homework hubs (such as EduHub). Link up with the UvA's CDO, who also focuses on participation in homework hubs for primary and secondary schools (University of Amsterdam 2020).
- Implement the concept of "studiezalen" (see here) at AUC: set up tutoring for school children from AUC's local neighbourhood in the Academic Building.
- Strengthen and use AUC relationships with Right2Education, Zeeburgia, Jeugdlab, Diversity Talks, and other CPI organizations to reach out to prospective students of diverse backgrounds. Ensure that information about AUC (admissions; programme / curriculum/ interest in and focus on diversity and inclusion) gets shared within such relationships. Use relations to encourage potential applications to participate in ORC activities / visits to AUC – or bring them into contact with ambassadors team.

MILESTONE: By end Autumn 2020 an overview of existing activities and proposals for strengthening them will have been completed.

B5: Engage with local neighbourhood organisations and civic partners in a structured manner (formerly the Engagement Council)
From 2020-21, ORC (GA)

- Organize a forum which enables AUC staff, students, local neighbourhood organisations, and community leaders to regularly meet, forge new projects and collaborations, and discuss (progress on) common goals.
- Build relationships with organisations or programmes focused on people with migration backgrounds & education, like Stichting Boost and Stichting UAF.
- Organise (an) event(s) at AUC and invite neighbourhood organisations and community leaders to experience the college firsthand. **-**
- We are establishing a collaboration with Moataz Ragheb, coordinator of the Student Impact Center (SIC) at FNWI, to collaborate on all matters of student volunteering, student engagement, and establishing long term relationships with civic partners in the local community.

MILESTONE: The details of the forum will be clear by end October 2020 and the first meeting held by end Autumn 2020

Inclusive language for outreach and admissions

The report "Let's Do Diversity" highlights the importance of "diversity-informed language" (Wekker et al. 2016, 7). This means developing a language that does not stigmatise or exclude people, but instead is sensitive to fairness, inclusion and diversity. An important insight is that concepts such as excellence, talent and success are not neutral terms. As argued by Wekker at al. (2016, 7), these terms are based on "masculine, Western and middle-class socio-economics characteristics". Consequently, use of such terms and lack of reflection about what meanings they hold (and to whom) can lead to exclusion. It is pertinent that we have thorough and ongoing conversations

about what language we use to promote AUC to prospective students, and what we mean by the concepts we employ. In this context, it is relevant to note that the VU aspires to "inclusive excellence" which they define as an "inclusive learning and working environment, in which difference serves as a stimulus for creativity and the development of talent" (Making Diversity Work, n.d., 5).

B6: Examine and discuss the language used to promote the college and explain its admissions process
From 2020-21 within Strategic Vision Exercise, DC (MT, M&C, AdmCom)

- Research how current focus on excellence is perceived by groups of diverse high school students in Amsterdam and vicinity (focus groups).
- Clearly communicate the value we ascribe to diversity and inclusion, and AUC's stance on racism and discrimination, on our website and through promotional materials.
- Ensure that student ambassadors and those involved in open days and admissions work communicate about AUC's admissions procedure in a way that reduces self-selection by diverse prospective students (i.e. because the impression may be invoked that AUC rejects all applications that do not meet admissions criteria).
- What we communicate about admissions criteria and the procedure to prospective students can have an impact on decisions to apply to AUC. A critical discussion is warranted about what the messages we convey to applications, including those who do not (yet) meet the criteria. It could make a difference, especially to first generation students, groups to know that even if they do not (yet) fully meet the admissions criteria, pathways to admission do exist.
- Revisit how we present and represent our curriculum (including on the website) , and re-position our college as an institution open to applicants who have followed a variety of curricula.

MILESTONE: By end of Autumn 2020 DC will report on progress on these actions and identify steps for further progress.

Admissions

AUC is a college with a selective admissions procedure. Prospective students who seek to study at AUC submit an application which goes through several stages of review. This review process involves the admissions officer and AUC's management assistant, admissions tutors, the admissions coordinator, and members of AUC's admissions committee. The college's processes for selection and admission were carefully researched and aim to avoid discrimination. In past years, AUC has worked both on further clarifying its admissions criteria and on ensuring consistency in the application of such criteria. Key questions at play in the admissions procedure are: what kind of cohort does AUC strive for? How do we choose are prospective students? To increase the diversity of AUC's student body and ensure that first-generation students and students of minority backgrounds have fair access to our College, the following actions can be undertaken.

B7: Developing a knowledge base
Commencing 2020-21, for implementation 2021-22, D, with Adm Committee (DC, EMT)

- Research how we can gather data (and which data we can gather) about the diversity of our applicants which we can use to understand how our student body

is and is not diverse (different indicators) and keep track of our progress as we implement our diversity action plan. Connect with the CDOs to benefit from their knowledge about possibilities and limitations. Note that the UvA CDO has made tracking diversity of staff and students a central goal (see here).

- Scope the inclusion of additional questions on AUC's application form, based on the outcome of our research into the possibilities and limitations of data collection.
- Set up a process at AUC to use students' answers to questions - for example about migration background, ethnic self-identification, and identification as first-generation student - and apply descriptive statistics to monitor AUC's progress and identify points of attention.

MILESTONE: By end of Autumn 2020 the Admissions Committee will have scoped the knowledge base and engaged on how to revise our approach. By end of 2020-2021 the process for the next round will have been revised.

B8: Revisit admissions criteria and process
From 2020-21, D with Admissions Committee and (EMT)

- Create clarity about how we want to approach applications by students who show the potential to reach but do not yet meet AUC's admissions criteria.
- Check that our published information about average GPAs can be understood with reference to VWO and IB applicants, and that maths requirements are applied to different qualifications in ways that are equitable to all applicants with sufficient skills to succeed at AUC.
- Discuss how applications with HBO qualifications can have fair chances to be selected and admitted.
- Consider how we can support applicants in fair access to our programme. This could include creating a distinct support pathway for applicants with less familiarity with higher education, and who show the potential but do not yet meet current admissions criteria. We are also mindful of the efforts of UvA and VU in summer schools and bridging programmes and wish to explore these options with them.

MILESTONES: By end of Autumn 2020 Admissions Committee will have addressed the first two and the fourth points. By the end of 2020-2021, AUC will have consulted the CDOs with regard to the third point.

B9: Attend to the diversity awareness and skills of the teams involved in the admissions process.
From 2020-21, DC (HR with HoS and Adm Cttee) will scope and commence reflection opportunities such as:

- Invite a VU or UvA expert on the Dutch educational landscape and its inherent inequalities to present a webinar to all staff involved in the admissions process.
- Enable discussions about how universities and colleges can avoid bias in admissions practices and invite external experts who can share best practices and/or scholarly knowledge on this topic.
- HoS will also be invited to nominate colleagues to the team with diversity skillsets and experience.

MILESTONE: This will be commenced before admissions are processed in Autumn 2020.

Scholarships

Scholarships play an important role in creating fair and equal access to AUC. The AUC scholarship fund (ASF), which was established by our founding Dean, operates as a foundation (*stichting*) and provides scholarships to talented low income and/or minority students. It is run by the ASF board, whose members include the rectors magnifici of the VU and UvA. Scholarships are awarded based on academic excellence (merit) and financial need. In the past, AUC also ran the Diversity Awards Programme (DAP). This programme enabled Dutch students with a minority background (as defined nationally) to study at AUC. The DAP was discontinued when the main donor ended its funding relationship.

AUC seeks to increase the amount of funding available for scholarships and reinstate a new iteration of the Diversity Awards Programme, to ensure that students from all backgrounds can realize their academic potential at AUC. . AUC's alumni and external relations officer already completed a fundraising strategy for the ASF, with both short term and long term aims.

B10: Evaluate and re-launch the Diversity Awards Programme
From 2020-21, AERO, MT

- Potential donors will be provided with several sponsorship packages, one of which is the DAP. They can opt to commit to a sponsorship for a period of 3 years.
- Research the strong and weak points of the previous Diversity Awards Programme through conversations with former recipients and staff. Use the outcomes of this research to shape the new DAP.
- Decide on criteria to judge DAP applications: especially examine which definitions AUC should employ, whether previous HE experience could be permitted, and the role of extracurricular activities and leadership profile.
- Decide how to frame the DAP: focus on excellence and prestige, avoid stigmatization of its recipients and attend to definitions that enable us to reach applicants from disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds and communities (e.g. first generation and socio-economic status). Consult with former recipients to discuss ways of pitching the DAP and discuss further with the Expertise Centre for Diversity policy (ECHO).
- Once installed, ensure DAP is promoted in and outside of AUC. This is essential, as UvA CDO points out that people don't always know about us and proactive work is required to reach out within communities, invite potential applicants to get to know us via structured events, etc.

MILESTONE: By end Autumn 2020 AERO will have presented a proposal for the new DAP to the ASF Board.

B11: Attract new ASF sponsors and donors
From 2020-21, AERO

- Develop marketing materials with packages from which potential donors can choose. These packages can include the DAP, establishing a named scholarship, a partner scholarship (for organisations, like NGOs) and a flexible scholarship donation.
- Reconnect with former ASF donors to explore why they ended the donor relationship and rekindle connections.
- Share the ASF review with AUC staff and solicit suggestions from staff about potential donor contacts – make use of colleagues' existing networks and follow up on sponsor leads. Build on network ASF board members.

- Make the process of donating to the ASF easier, by enabling online donations. This requires collaboration with the UvA's controller
- Consult with UvA and VU scholarship fund directors and explore ways of increasing ASF visibility / possibility of sharing connections with possible donors.
- Continue to work with the AUC Alumni Association, in particular previous recipients of scholarships, to increase the ASF visibility and build potential donor relationships (ongoing).

MILESTONE: By end 2020-2021, AERO will have progressed these points and reported on them to the ASF Board.

C. Supporting Students and Building an Inclusive Community

Living and breathing diversity also means making it more visible and experiential on a day to day basis, reflected in AUC's extra-curricular activities, our support for students' learning and well-being, and embedded in our ways of working, speaking and joint habits as well as rituals. This means that our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion is integrated throughout our programme and college. We also recognise that students from certain backgrounds, particularly those who are first generation students or come from families less familiar with higher education, may need tailored support, and that it is up to us as an institution and in our practice to make this available in ways that are easy to access.[6] Finally, we commit to making AUC a space where everyone has the opportunity to have a voice, to participate in and out of class, in discussions and activities, through making clear our zero tolerance approach to discrimination and racism, and enshrining our shared responsibility for promoting respectful dialogue even when we disagree.

C1: Workshops on intersectionality, diversity & inclusion (by Siema Ramdas and Amrita Das)
January 2021, June 2021: DC (SLO and GA2SLO, GIE Coor)
In 2019-2020 we initiated a series of workshops on intersectionality, diversity and inclusion for first year students, alongside the *Global Identity Experience* course. Taking place January 2020, June 2020. Initial workshop evaluations were quite positive. This gives all our new students an opportunity to learn more about these topics, engage in (self-)reflection and experiential learning, and contextualises the learning to our own community. We therefore intend to continue this series. All first year students will be required to participate in said workshop.
MILESTONE: Workshops delivered in January and June this year.

AUC is first and foremost a community of learners. Our conversations about DEI in and beyond our curriculum therefore need to be held not just among faculty and other staff or 'diversity experts' but also include our students. Various previous initiatives have highlighted a lack of permanent platforms where this conversation can take place and best practices could be captured and passed on more widely. This is also addressed in section E below with attention to the implementation of our action plan, however, here we outline how we will open up forums for conversations, co-creation and peer support more broadly. Another opportunity identified concerns more proactive outward orientation of our initiatives to connect to both our direct environment and peer institutions in the wider world.

[6] UvA CDO annual report 2019: "The Get Ready! summer school was a three-day program held in August 2019. It was organized in cooperation with the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies (IIS), specifically aimed at first-generation students (i.e. students who are the first in their families to go to university). This program provides crucial support systems within what can become alienating academic spaces."

C2: Scope, with AUCSA, and the Communications team, how we create spaces for diversity within the building (and online).
Autumn 2020, DC/GA (working with EMT)
This includes gaining a fuller understanding of the range of diversity committee activities existing at AUC, and establishing an appropriate forum for regular joint conversations, reflection and peer support *within* our community. It is also important to create a buzz around events and initiatives, It can include exploring possibilities for specific **projects** or **collaborations with AUCSA.** Consider making available one or more CPIs that create opportunities for students to assist with various aspects of the plan.
MILESTONE: Progress on these points will be included in the DC's report to EMT by end Autumn 2020

C3: Create more informal opportunities for students to interact more with management, lecturers and other colleagues.
Planning in Autumn 2020, Launch in Spring 2021 or earlier if possible, DC/GA (working with EMT).
This includes launching Any Questions events that bring together students and staff for open conversations and exchange with informal facilitation. These could build on the Heads of Studies lunches, and either be physical or virtual. HoS and Core Management Team can also establish regular student office hours (e.g. walk-in, no appointment needed, physical or virtual).
MILESTONE: Arrangements will have commenced in Spring 2021 at the latest.

C4: Develop a Diversity Awards Programme alumni network (once the DAP awards have been reinstalled), to support incoming students.
2020-2021, AERO
MILESTONE: Network will be operational by Spring 2021 at latest.

C5: Support regular conversational spaces where issues of diversity are discussed outside the curriculum. Given the continuing need to adapt our approach to the pandemic, these spaces include online components.
From Autumn 2020, DC
In recent years we have hosted Who's in Towns addressing relevant topics and should continue to do so. We will complement this by opening up new forums including:

- **AUC Podcast Network:**(Q4 2020) – To consult podcast team[7]
- Kick off an **Annual Lecture Series** (20/21 planned with a focus on James Baldwin).
- **"AUC Reads…"**: informal lunch sessions where students and colleagues can discuss their current readings beyond the curriculum in a hosted conversation.
- **Workshops with *Lilithmag*** to shine light on diversity and inclusion issues in a creative way through the arts & film industry. This was initiated prior to the pandemic and should be revived. (AERO is contact, /DC/GA)

MILESTONE: Lecture Series will have commenced during Autumn 2020; DC will include progress on above items in report to EMT by end of 2020-2021.

C6: Systematically document and share best practices
From Autumn 2020, DC (M&C, FDC, GA)

[7] Note that there is scope for connecting with the VU initiative Courageous Conversations.

In faculty development seminars, podcasts, website/social media, blogs or other formats[8]
MILESTONE: DC will invite ideas for this from the community and include progress on above items in report to EMT by end Autumn 2020

Inclusive Environment and the role of Tutors

Previous work in this area, including the Wekker report, offers many useful ways of thinking about diversity and inclusion, such as taking discrimination and racism more seriously, developing and disseminating informed and non-stigmatising language, and creating safe mechanisms to address and tackle instances of discrimination. While the principles are clear, many of the necessary actions still need to be developed. There remains more work to do in consulting with colleagues via the University College Guidance Network, and with students, lecturers, tutors, and experts in the field. With respect to student support and academic mentoring (tutoring) there are many issues to address, some with longer timeframes than others.

C7: Explore ways of raising awareness of pronouns among lecturers and tutors, including through the Faculty Handbook (see also D1 below).
Autumn 2020, DC (DoE, ST)
MILESTONE: DC will include progress on above items in report to EMT by end Autumn 2020

C8: Ongoing work in the tutor team
Starts Autumn 2020, ST (DC)

- Explore how decoloniality and intersectionality manifest in a tutoring context.
- Consider the positionality and power dynamics in tutoring.
- Creating a system/process that can quickly pick up and respond to signals.
- Consider how to play to the different strengths - whether skills, knowledge bases or experiences - of our colleagues in their interactions with students, and to share best practices widely across the team.
- Establish a small, agile consultative working group that can convene quickly and informally for tutors who wish to discuss or prepare for meeting students with respect to intercultural literacy and awareness. Discuss options with CDOs and align with training programmes (e.g. online units) to help raise diversity skills and literacy.

MILESTONE: By end Autumn 2020 ST will update EMT on progress on the above.

Most tutors strive to be attentive and empathetic to their tutees on a wide range of matters, including diversity and inclusion in both academic and personal contexts[9]. However, tutors need clarity on how they respond to the range of issues that arise. This is partly addressed by the flowchart developed by the SLO in 2019-2020 but needs to be

[8] WG Diversity (Culture Track) observed "uneven practices among lecturers and courses in enriching diversity – students, alumni and lecturers reported a range of examples of diversity enriched teaching and material, but those instances remain isolated and lecturers have little opportunity for sharing best practices."
[9] The Senior Tutor points out that, in speaking with tutors, the sense is that tutors are far less concerned about failing to be receptive to their students' needs than they are about their ability to do something about it. While skills training are important ways to promote and support diversity and inclusion, just as important are developing structural processes. Tutors feel constrained by what they (i.e., AUC) can offer in terms of support. The mantra for all student issues has tended to be "go talk to your tutor," so tutors have been expected to step into the breach to address all manners of issues: providing mental health support; mediating conflicts between students and other students, teaching faculty, and the administration; solving administrative mistakes; guiding students through the institutional bureaucracy; and so on. Tutors should be part of the support structure, not the only support structure. A clear, robust, and accountable reporting structure is needed and responsibilities and expectations for tutors need to be clear and coherent.

further developed. This work (C8) and these goals (C9) relate closely to on-going work undertaken with the Tutoring Working Group, and to ensure that our efforts are joined up and capacity for development is focused, should be well aligned with the goals of this group, which also includes MZ representation.

C9: Longer term goals for improving tutoring (also relevant to section D below)
Starts Autumn 2020 ongoing, D (with DoE, ST and EMT)

- Diversify the tutor team: attention will be paid to the diversity skills and experiences of the tutor team
- Redefine tutoring – as part of the ongoing work on tutoring and in the Strategic Vision Exercise.
- Put in place continuous training and reflection opportunities based on professional best practices.
- The importance of skills development will be emphasized by AUC management as integral to good tutoring, not an optional added service. Tutors will be encouraged to take advantage of their existing expertise and to develop additional expertise.
- Build an inventory of the different supports and services that tutors can refer tutees to. Clarify with SLO and EMT the various kinds of support students need, address any gaps, and ensure these are widely understood and in place. Address how students can provide feedback on support from tutors and other resources.

MILESTONE: By end Autumn 2020 ST will update EMT on progress on the above.

Incidents of harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct: our policy and responses

AUC students who experience or witness instances of harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct need visible, safe and supportive ways of reporting these. A group led by the previous Student Life Officer put together a comprehensive package of protocol and procedures which was endorsed by the then Student Council and Board of Studies. In 2019, a special complaint/reporting form for such incidents was implemented and an anonymous reporting mechanism made available (all complaints/reports go to the Student Life Officer in the first instance). Revisions to our various Handbooks were implemented and refreshed each year, and attention paid to this issue in the review and revision of our Codes of Conduct in 2020. However, revisions to the overarching document, with the details of policy, protocols and procedures, were not completed as promptly as they should have been and should have been given higher priority. The document includes a section on its review and amendment, and the Student Life Officer is leading in monitoring and reporting on implementation to AUC management. The 2020-2021 Social Code of Conduct refers to this document but notes that the revised version is currently in the final phase of endorsement and adoption. The Codes of Conduct note that the expectations in the Codes extend to all those working at AUC or visiting AUC, not just students.

C.10. Complete the adoption and publication of AUC harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct policy and procedures and establish a reference group to oversee its ongoing implementation
MD, August 2020
MILESTONE: Policy and procedures published as soon as endorsed. Reference group established by end October 2020.

D) Staffing

AUC aims to enhance diversity in its staffing base and to ensure that our approach to HR is attentive to different needs, values diversity skills, and proactively supports all those who work with us. As educators, we also aim to ensure that students encounter role models that reflect their own experiences and promote a diverse and equitable society. This requires us to become more aware of social and cultural justice and equity as these impact on all our experiences and opportunities. Diversity, equity and inclusion here indicate (but are not limited to) ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, social disadvantage, religion and age.

Our approach to staffing is multi-faceted and developed in partnership, reflecting the staff base, which includes: core faculty (academics employed to teach and tutor at AUC); partner faculty (academics based at UvA or the VU who are deployed to teach at AUC); faculty external to UvA/VU (other academics providing courses); administrative, support and service professionals employed by AUC; and colleagues who work in the building via contract partnerships (catering, cleaning, reception).

We aim to make AUC a desirable place to work for all, including members of minoritised groups. Our approach includes attention to the categories of recruitment and selection, arrangements for on-boarding and induction, support, supervision, training and advancement, with independent reporting channels for staff experiencing discrimination, and where diversity skills are recognised in recruitment and promotion. It also intersects with our commitments to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all those who use our building and virtual spaces.

D1. Staffing Actions
Starting Autumn 2020, D (EMT)

- Require panel chairs and others involved in recruitment and selection to have undertaken appropriate training.
- Ensure that the wording of all vacancies proactively encourages and facilitates applicants from a range of backgrounds.
- Check that vacancies include relevant diversity skills as a criterion.
- For each vacancy consider whether advertising or agencies can further promote in ways that reach potential employees from a range of backgrounds.
- Engage key decision makers in our UvA/VU partner faculties in discussion to ensure they understand our commitment to diverse staffing, and engage them with determination as we seek to pilot models for the deployment of partner faculty that create viable career pathways for academic colleagues.
- Ensure that all colleagues have opportunities to discuss diversity and equity during their annual consultations, can access training or other forms of professional development support when required.
- HoS to ensure DEI awareness is built into their forward planning, including existing processes for reviews of aspects of the curriculum (in close liaison with the formal bodies and in accordance with established processes).
- Use co-teaching models to bring diverse perspectives to our curriculum.
- There are opportunities here to work with various "scholars at risk" programmes, and our EPICUR alliance also brings opportunities. We will ensure that our approach is uppermost in these activities.
- Provide opportunities for reflection and learning about diversity, including unconscious bias, privilege, diversity skills and awareness during faculty development seminars and other forums.

- Provide ongoing guidance to teaching staff in the following ways: include invitation in the Faculty Handbook to a) encourage lecturers to include attention to diversity and the reproduction of knowledge as it occurs in the course, enabling reflection on how and what knowledge has been produced in the history of the discipline;[10] b) include guidance on content warnings and inclusive classroom strategies, and c) build on the richness and the limits of their own positionality and expertise and find creative ways to enhance diversity and inclusion.
- Include an appropriate introduction to issues of diversity in the training given to all new AUC faculty at the start of semester (partner/external) and in onboarding (core).
- Consider diversity skills in future appointments of members to AUC's international advisory board.

MILESTONE: D will meet with each HoS, DoE and MD during Autumn 2020 to scope progress on each of the above, identify next steps and report on progress to EMT by end of Autumn 2020.

Awareness & Capacity Building (both students and staff)

Implementing our framework within our everyday work is an ambitious aim and we recognise that this entails ongoing professionalisation and support. Thus, it is important to make clear that this Action Plan expresses support for our continuing dialogues with each other on our approach as educators (the self-reflection that is a foundation for a liberal arts and science approach) and a stimulus to question and seek broader perspectives. We also seek to increase ways of showcasing best practices more informally, such as encouraging news stories and blogs to attend to successes in these areas and inviting faculty development seminar contributions. Diversity development should not solely address intercultural communication and unconscious bias (although these are important), but should also provide opportunities for considering how to create and manage inclusive classrooms and spaces, including skills in guiding anti-racist conversations.

D2. Continuous development for staff
Starting Autumn 2020, DC (with FDC, EMT)

- Engage with the VU Mixed Classroom project.
- Pursue options for online learning modules that faculty could complete on a regular basis.
- Explore with Communications team ways to showcase best practice online, such as a maintained blog element on the Diversity website tab.

MILESTONE: DC to coordinate these actions commencing Spring 2021.

E) Enabling and Facilitating Action on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

We do not see diversity as a solution, but rather as an ongoing commitment. We recognise that this means a continuous conversation and engagement, rather than a fixed end point. It also implies that we will not 'get everything right' with one sweeping adjustment, but commit to make the changes needed to support ongoing progress. Ensuring that progress is made on completing the actions in this plan needs follow through, cross-referencing and forward planning; these in turn require cultural and

[10] For example, such engagement can occur when describing the course material at the outset of the semester, or at moments of collective evaluation of the course. The format for doing so is individually determined, and best practices shared (Working Group diversity in the Culture Track).

structural change. In specific, the following components should be embedded across our institution:

A collective understanding and responsibility – Change can come about when we engage in meaningful discussions about diversity and our approach to building an inclusive community, both formally and informally. Management and leadership roles in particular can take initiatives by establishing our principles, promoting initiatives and fostering change, while all of us can contribute by participating respectfully in dialogue that advances inclusion, raises awareness or enhances fairness and equity.

Dedicated leadership and coordination - To get traction on agreed actions, our structures need to provide appropriate and sufficient resources, with clear remits and responsibilities. We will establish a Diversity Leadership Group within AUC's management, to champion and promote the plan, appoint a Diversity Coordinator to support and report on implementation, and bring together key colleagues and student representation regularly as a Diversity Workgroup (see below) to make sure there is coordination, including with student bodies such as the Diversity Commission.

Regular consultation, raised visibility - We will establish and support structures that provide opportunities for our community to become more aware of our diversity initiatives, provide feedback on our progress, feed in new initiatives and conduct transparent review of our progress and where we can improve on this when needed. The formal co-governance bodies (MZ) will be invited to address the plan within existing structures, and the Diversity Workgroup will also provide a broader base for sharing information, monitoring its implementation and development. Additionally, we hold a Diversity Forum twice a year, open to the whole community, where we report on progress against the annual plan and anticipate developments in the next period.

We therefore need an enabling platform to support, implement, facilitate, review and develop the Action Plan. The platform will be set up in Autumn 2020 and includes:

E1. Staffing Resource
Autumn 2020, D (CMT)

- Establish a **Diversity Leadership Group** (DLG) consisting of the Dean and other senior colleagues to steer the plan. The group will meet (at least) monthly to oversee the implementation and development of the plan, liaise closely with the Diversity Workgroup (see below), and report at each monthly meeting of EMT.
- Appoint a **Diversity Coordinator** (DC) to support the DLG; facilitate and report on implementation; raise visibility and promote involvement in our diversity initiatives, liaise and consult with the community, and promote the framework.
- Create a **Diversity Workgroup** (DW) that meets monthly with the above to involve colleagues in the ongoing work of the Action Plan. The proposed composition of this group is: DLG, DC, ORC, AERO, SLO, GA and SLO GA, representatives from SC, BoS, ODC, AUCSA, Diversity Commission, and additional student members. The goal of the meeting is to keep each other updated and informed on progress.

MILESTONE: Resource in place and operational ASAP in Autumn 2020.

E2. Annual Cycle
D (DLG, DC, CS)
The DLG will report annually on progress on the Action Plan and present the following year's iteration. To support this cycle, a **Diversity Forum** will be established, with open

meetings will held twice a year. These meetings can also include discussions of key issues brought up by members of the community, as well as showcasing initiatives. Meetings will be held in January to check progress midway, and in May to review one year's actions and anticipate the following year.
MILESTONE: Cycle underway by end Autumn 2020

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